



ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Provincial Operations Intelligence Bureau

PROJECT HENDON – STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE OVERVIEW

2021-01-21 // 1300 HOURS // HENDON 098-2021

This report is issued weekly. The date span covered in this edition is from January 14, 2021, to January 21, 2021. Next report date is January 28, 2021.

KEY INFORMATION:

1. Developments at the McKenzie Meadows Occupation (MMO) include the partial return of stolen heavy equipment and additional road damage. The ideologically motivated criminal extremist, who was recently arrested for their involvement at MMO, is believed to have returned. There is no change to the number of barricades situated in Caledonia, ON.
2. Anti-lockdown demonstrations have been planned for Toronto and London this weekend. Where the public may be experiencing generalized pandemic-fatigue, ideologically opposed groups and collectives may be more disposed to mobilize toward action. POIB has no specific intelligence to indicate any planning toward violence.

McKenzie Meadows Occupation (MMO) and Indigenous Solidarity

On Monday January 18, 2021, occupiers released a statement through social media announcing an intention to return the stolen heavy equipment, remove one of the blockades, and adjust another on January 20, 2021. The main spokesperson also conducted media scrums in advance of the return date and the decision was largely credited to community consultation. In actuality, some, but not all, of the stolen property was returned yesterday, and while the bus barricade was moved back several feet, occupiers did not open any of the road blockades. Recent reporting indicates occupiers continue to employ the retained stolen heavy equipment, which they operated during the nighttime hours to enact further destruction to the roadway near to where the bus has been repositioned. A key ideologically motivated criminal extremist who had been sought and arrested January 5, 2021, for their participation in and continuance of the offence, is believed to have breached their conditions and returned to occupied areas just prior to the social media announcement. Additionally, these actions followed closely from concerns expressed late last week that overall support and provisions for the occupation would diminish with the increased public health measures as a result of the Provincial State of Emergency and the Stay-at-Home order coming into force.

No new information has been learned in relation to the online organizing and fundraising campaign in support of an Indigenous-solidarity trip to Ottawa planned for January 27, 2021. The event had been organized in connection to the MMO and prior to the Province-wide State of Emergency and Stay-at-Home order; it remains unclear if the event will be cancelled. Original messaging called for participants to deliver letters to the steps of Parliament Hill in an attempt to lobby the federal government into negotiating Indigenous land disputes. Social media metrics indicate the event has not attracted a lot interest since it was first made public a few weeks ago. Notably, any funds

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that are raised above the associated costs to travel and lodging were to be donated to the MMO legal defence Go Fund Me account.

The current public health restrictions in response to high COVID-19 case counts appears to have quelled large demonstration actions associated to climate and social justice activism. Support continues to be expressed through online social media campaigning. A Southern Ontario anarchist collective has recently published materials that praise the actions of organizers and participants of a Montreal demonstration held January 16, 2021, to protest the Provincial curfew. Collectively, all of the public health measures imposed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic have been criticized as infringements violating Charter rights and examples of government overreach by ideologically motivated criminal extremists and anarchists; however, as noted by the author of the materials it has taken the implementation of a curfew to bring about a mobilization. Disposed audiences are encouraged to respond to the new challenges of organizing a resistance movement in the age of COVID; links to sister-sites and other anarchy platforms are readily available. POIB has no specific intelligence to indicate criminal or violent acts are being planned in relation to the current public health measures in place within Ontario. Should additional measures be implemented, such as a curfew, it may bring about a response that would see disposed individuals mobilize to organize and commit actions, including those that result in property damage and possible violence.

Protest Actions Associated to Far-Right Ideology

Toronto has consistently experienced anti-mask and anti-lockdown protests since the spring of 2020; however, two parties were arrested for their involvement in actions over the weekend of January 16 and 17, 2021. One of the arrested parties has recently started a Go Fund Me campaign to raise funds for their legal defence. Additionally, this individual promotes the ability for anyone to be 'granted immediate Indigenous status and therefore have the power of law to revoke their consent to be governed' through a web link and associated fee.¹ As previously noted, several of the anti-mask and anti-lockdown demonstrations carried out across the country, and including those in the United States, have drawn the participation of individuals who hold associations to groups and organizations that espouse militant ideologically motivated extremism associated with far-right movements. Open source and police reporting indicate additional demonstration actions have been planned for the Toronto and London areas this coming weekend. The Toronto events include a 'legal action' to be carried out against Premier Ford in response to the lockdown measures by an individual who promotes conspiracy rhetoric, espouses ideologically motivated extremists views, and was ordered to pay \$2.5 million CAD in a hate speech defamation suit.² All stakeholders are aware of the event, potential criminality, and disruption to public order arising from the planned action by the individual and their followers. The recurrent anti-lockdown and anti-mask demonstrations held in downtown locations are anticipated to occur again this weekend. A London area group has organized a "Freedom Drive" for Saturday January 23, 2021, at 19:00 hours. Participants are to meet at the 401 and Wellington area for a peaceful *protest of the lockdown and orders*. Messaging includes references to patriotism. The police of jurisdiction are aware of the event. Similar to anarchist organizing, much of the rhetoric and calls for action associated to anti-mask and anti-lockdown events are circulated through open sources and social media platforms, both open and closed.

¹ <https://askit4equity.com/> - accessed 2021-01-21

² <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/judge-awards-businessman-2-5-million-for-suffering-hate-speech-at-its-worst> - accessed 2021-01-21

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Following the United States Presidential Inauguration ceremonies yesterday, several media articles and publications continue to indicate extremism of all kind is trending upward. Where this had been reported as correlating to the duration of pandemic, it has now been extended to also include the polarization of political views left in the wake of outgoing President Trump's regime. Political analysts are suggesting that disposed audiences, especially those aligned with far-right ideologies will continue to engage in their extremist views through closed communication platforms, but may also endeavour to do so in a double-down effort. As was evidenced by the number of Proud Boys chapters exposed through the dismantling of Parler, Canada, and more specifically Ontario, is known to have pockets of individuals and groups who espouse ideologically motivated criminal extremism rooted in what are generally considered far-right movements ingrained in ethno-nationalism, gender-based, white supremacy, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and anti-government beliefs.

Assessment

It is unclear to what extent 'community consultation' weighed into the decision taken by occupiers to stage the return of the equipment or if the actions were contrived to serve their larger agenda of maintaining momentum and public interest. The continued acts of destruction to public roadways in close proximity to critical infrastructure appear to be aligned with sentiments espoused by ideologically motivated criminal extremists who encourage criminal acts to effect social change. Notably missing from the messaging issued by the occupiers was any reference to repairing the rail line, which has been inoperable since October 22, 2020, and resulted in exigent continuity planning for a number of industries including oil products to avert gasoline supply shortages for Southern Ontario. Occupiers appear to be aware of the larger economic impact associated with the disrupted rail service and may be using this as leverage to ensure the federal government engages in negotiations.

While the inauguration of President Biden took place without incident and his address spoke largely of unifying and repairing relationships between groups with opposing views, it remains to be seen how successful his administration will be in this regard. One of the first executive orders President Joe Biden signed was reported to be the revocation of the Keystone Pipeline, which was met with marked criticism by Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, as well as an acknowledgement and statement by Prime Minister Trudeau with respect to possible negative implications to economy and energy supply agreements. The move may be viewed as a victory and serve as the impetus for climate and Indigenous-solidarity activists to re-boot organizing similar actions associated to the Wet'suwet'en and "Shutdown Canada" movement of 2020. However, currently there are no indicators to suggest organizing of this kind.

The ongoing urging by anarchist collectives to organize a resistance in the age of COVID appears to be consistent with the overall anarchist narrative and anti-authority agenda of which few actions have resulted. Should additional measures be implemented in Ontario, such as a curfew, it may bring about a response that would see disposed individuals mobilise to organize and commit direct actions, including those that could result in property damage and/or violence. While there has been a consistent mustering of anti-lockdown protests in urban areas, with Toronto notably the epi-centre, the event planned in the London area may be indicative of a growing body of support toward organizing of this kind. As noted, there appears to be a connection between anti-lockdown proponents and conspiracy theorists who may also espouse far-right ideologies. Further, it should be noted that a curfew would also

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likely evoke a negative response amongst anti-lockdown proponents. Outside of the event planned in relation to Premier Ford where the possibility of public order and criminality associated to the 'legal action' have been addressed, POIB has no specific intelligence to indicate criminal or violent acts are being planned in relation to the current public health measures in place within Ontario. OPP and partner agencies are attuned to changes in the threat environment and remain engaged at all levels. Through a co-ordination of efforts, the OPP continues to provide situational awareness supporting operations at provincial tables.

Please send all information and/or intelligence regarding relevant suspicious incidents or acts of criminal extremism to the following Project Hendon intake email address:

OPP.Project.Hendon@opp.ca

Ontario Chiefs of Police
2021-JAN-21 @ 1600hrs
OPP - POIB

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